

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 08MANAGUA1367, NICARAGUA: ATLANTIC COAST ELECTIONS OUTLOOK

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08MANAGUA1367**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08MANAGUA1367	2008-11-07 23:00	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758464.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4103/la-embusa-y-el-gabinete-de-ortega>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4104/d-rsquo-escoto-en-onu-ldquo-un-desafio-de-ortega-a-ee-uu-rdquo>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4102/estrada-y-la-ldquo-doble-cara-rdquo-ante-ee-uu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-discrecion>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

VZCZCXRO6275
PP RUEHLMC
DE RUEHMU #1367/01 3122300
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 072300Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3358
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//J2/J3/J5// PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 001367

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CEN KRAAIMOORE
DEPT FOR USOAS
DEPT FOR DRL AND INR/IAA
STATE PASS USAID
USAID FOR CARDENA, KITE, BATALLE
NSC FOR GARCIA
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [NU](#)
SUBJECT: NICARAGUA: ATLANTIC COAST ELECTIONS OUTLOOK

REF: A. MANAGUA 1329
[1](#)B. MANAGUA 520
[1](#)C. MANAGUA 419

Classified By: Amb. Robert J. Callahan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

.1. (C) SUMMARY: On October 23, 24 and 25, EmbOff met with candidates and political contacts from Nicaragua, s North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) and South Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS) to assess the conditions for municipal elections scheduled for November 9, 2008 and January 18, 2009 (See REF B and C). The Sandinista (FSLN) campaigns are generally well organized and financed, while opposition political parties lack financial resources and have fought with each other. However, as the Election Day approaches, there is a growing movement to unite pro-democracy forces around one candidate in order to defeat FSLN candidates. END SUMMARY

Churches Try to Be Neutral in the RAAN
- - - - -

[1](#)2. (C) On October 23, EmbOff traveled to Puerto Cabezas and met political, religious, NGO and community leaders to assess the conditions for the January 18, 2009 municipal elections. (The elections in the RAAN were postponed until January, nominally because of reconstruction difficulties arising from last September's hurricane damage, but actually because of Sandinista political maneuvering.) Although the campaign had not started officially, our contacts told us that the candidates were already campaigning. In private meetings with the influential Moravian and Catholic churches, leaders expressed their neutrality in the elections, but also their fears that the probability for fraud is high, especially in the absence of outside election observation. They also believe that unless there is an alliance between democratic parties, the FSLN will win in Puerto Cabezas, Waspam and Prinzapolka in spite of the corrupt practices and general loss of confidence that have plagued current administrations (see REF A).

RAAN Election Tricks by the FSLN
- - - - -

[1](#)3. (C) A poll conducted on October 20 by the Central American University (UCA) found that the Puerto Cabezas municipal votes for mayor would be as follows: 40% to FSLN; 8% to Yatama; 27% ALN; and 19% to PLC. The poll predicted that the

FSLN would win even though the people are upset with the government and current FSLN mayor (see REF A). Candidates explained that the FSLN was ahead in the polls because it was buying votes and because the democratic candidates were fighting among themselves. One candidate confirmed that he witnessed Citizen Power Councils (CPC) members buying votes for the FSLN, offering leading citizens amounts up to C\$10,000 (\$500 USD) from purported Venezuelan sources. Another election trick by the FSLN and Yatama was to invite people to large dinners to buy their loyalty. Candidates also revealed that Yatama-FSLN National Assembly Deputy Brooklyn Rivera has tried to manipulate the Moravian church vote by holding meetings with pastors and asking them to pray for President Ortega to have "15 more years."

Potential Alliances in the RAAN

14. (C) The PLC candidate for mayor in Puerto Cabezas, Osornio "Blas" Coleman, runs his own radio station and is respected for his service as a Contra in the 1980s against the Sandinistas. However, many of our contacts said that Blas is "not a politician" and has had trouble gathering support for his candidacy. Others explained that the ALN candidate for mayor was ahead among democratic parties because the ALN was still incorrectly associated with Eduardo Montealegre. (NOTE: In the 2006 presidential race the ALN candidate Montealegre routed all other candidates in Puerto Cabezas and is still a popular figure in the region. END NOTE) The ALN candidate also has more personal resources to run his campaign (he owns a successful fishing business) and the ALN campaign

MANAGUA 00001367 002 OF 002

headquarters are centrally located in Bilwi. Dr. Kenneth Serapia of indigenous party PAMUK said that the party lacks resources to mount an effective campaign, but needed to participate in this election to preserve the party. The PRN candidate expressed his willingness to renounce to form a unity ticket with the PLC, but the ALN and PLC candidates had not agreed upon who would lead the alliance. In Waspam, there was a unity alliance between the PAMUK, PLC and ALN candidates and it was ahead in the polls over the FSLN candidates. In Prinzapolka, there was no movement to form a unity alliance and the FSLN was ahead of other parties. Close Embassy contacts told us that after the November 9 municipal elections in the rest of the country, there would be more pressure on the opposition to form a unity alliance in Puerto Cabezas and Prinzapolka.

Moving to Unity in RAAS

15. (C) On October 24, EmbOff traveled to Bluefields, the regional government center of the RAAS (where elections will be held on November 9, with the rest of Nicaragua minus the RAAN) and a traditional stronghold for the PLC. EmbOff met with Bluefields Mayor Luis Gutierrez, RAAS Governor Yadira Flores, RAAS Regional President Lourdes Aguilar (all three are members of the PLC), as well as Bluefields mayoral candidates Dr. Howard Bacon from the PLC, and Dane Hodgson from ALN. Polls claim that the vote was split evenly between the FSLN candidate and the PLC and ALN candidates. Dr. Bacon is a member of the Vamos con Eduardo movement (VCE) and joined the PLC with Montealegre. Dr. Bacon explained that six of the VCE candidates that were slated for strategic positions in the city council had been replaced on the ballot by PLC members loyal to ex-president Aleman, which means that if he wins, he would not have the full support from council members. The ALN candidate, who is from Corn Island, told us that he had not received any financial support from the central party and financed his campaign through a loan against his home. He was willing to renounce his candidacy and support the PLC candidate if they would retire the debt against his home. On November 6, the Corn Island ALN mayoral candidate announced that he would renounce and support the PLC candidate in order to unify the democratic vote and

defeat the FSLN candidate.

COMMENT

- - - -

16. (C) The municipal elections are widely seen as a referendum on President Ortega and the Sandinista party. This is also true in Nicaragua,s Atlantic coast; however, the democratic vote is fractured between PLC, ALN and regional parties. Without unity in several key races, the FSLN could capture the vote, perhaps even expand its control in the RAAS, which has historically been under Liberal governance.

CALLAHAN